



Church Calendar

In His times

St Luke 1:1-25

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The word impossible is not seen in the dictionary of God as everything is possible by Him. Everything good is from Him and nothing exists without Him. When God stands for us who can stand against us.

This Sunday we remember the annunciation to the priest Zechariah. When we look into the family of this Godly Priest we can see Zechariah and Elizabeth both are from priestly families' background. The Holy Scripture gives them a very excellent conduct certificate. *St Luke 1:6* says "They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." But they didn't have children and were already in their old age.

In olden days being childless was considered to be a very painful situation as having a child was like a blessing from the above. Childless is barrenness and women in such situation was looked down by the community. But this priestly couple sets examples of faith even when there is a traumatic experience they are facing. That is the reason they got a good conduct certificate from above.

Hurdles of life didn't stop Zechariah and Elizabeth. We see them doing their duty and by that pleasing God. In the Holy Scripture we see the most blessed and important occasion of a Priest is to offer incense to God. Getting an opportunity to offer incense, was considered a blessed occasion and highest privilege.

Zechariah name was chosen by the lot and he was in the altar burning incense and assembly of the worshippers were praying outside. Then the angel appeared before him, rather than being joyful he was startled and gripped with fear. The angel says, 'do not be afraid your prayers has been answered'. But the smoke of confusion and doubt arose in him he questioned the angel and asked for sign. His non-acceptance of the message made the angel upset and the angel said "I am Gabriel, I stand in the presence of God and you will remain silent till the day what I spoke come true".

Even though they prayed, they believed their prayers could be answered. Zachariah thought he became an old man and his wife is also old and such thought formed a cloud of doubt. His understanding of the law of nature overrules his faith and this made him question the angel.

Here we can ponder on the words Christ spoke "Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" *St Matthew 17:20*

The mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds in the world. They grow best in hot and dry climates. From this tiny seed, a tree can grow very tall and wide. The same can be said of our faith as faith is not when we have abundance. When we trust God, in our weakness and bareness He works wonders in us and through us. Doubt should not turn us blind. When the mouth of Zachariah opened in doubt it was closed and in was opened only when he was ready to proclaim what he had heard came true. Doubts are seeds sown by devil to blind us from truth.

In the kirkilion of Holy Saints we sing "The righteous will flourish like palm trees; they will grow like the cedars of Lebanon. They shall still bear fruit in old age. They shall be fresh and flourishing," how true it is when we look into the life of Zachariah and Elizabeth they bore fruits in their old age, a Son who is greatest born from a woman.

The type of Child promised by angel to Zachariah and Elizabeth

Reason for Joy

St Luke 1:14 "He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice at his birth."



We live in an age where parents are so much worried about their children and when comparing with others are sad and pained. But here we see being said by angel that he will be a Joy to the family and very important is he is not only a Joy to the family but to others also as many would rejoice in his birth.

Detachment

St Luke 1:15 (a) "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink."

Pleasing God is not an easy task but not an impossible task as Saints have lived in the same soil we live and has pleased God. *Numbers 6:2-3* "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of dedication to the Lord as a Nazirite, they must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or other fermented drink. They must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins.'

When we seek worldly approval we forget the approval from above. Detachment to the world is attachment to above. Saying no to worldly desires make us sober and secure. For a little time of pleasure we may have to pay a life time.

Filled with Holy Spirit

St Luke 1:15 (b) "He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

Here we see the role of Parents as if the Child should be Holy, the parents has to be Holy. The life and work of Zachariah and Elizabeth were providing a platform for the growth of St John the Baptist. Unless there is an environment provided it is difficult for the growth a Saint.

Leader

St Luke 1:16-17 "And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

If John the Baptist prepared a nation for the first coming of Christ we all have to prepare ourselves and others for the second coming of Christ. We need to lead by examples conversion of the heart is more needed today. As John the Baptist says about Jesus Christ that "He must increase, but I must decrease." *St John 3:30*. This will become practical in our life only when we look at life from God's perspective of our life. When we put God first many changes will happen in our lives

The positive changes that happens are:

- In Our priorities
- In Our way of life
- In Our schedules
- In Our relationship with others

When we take up God's plan we become Full time Christians rather than being part time Christians, Sunday Christians or customized Christians. "The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing."

-Psalm 34:10.

